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ABSTRACT

This report, based on statistics gathered from the first statewide census of Illinois public secondary school course offerings, enrollments, and cocurricular activities, focuses on English language arts courses. Among the highlights from the report are the following: (1) Illinois junior and senior high schools typically rely on general, grade specific courses to provide instruction in English language arts: (2) in senior high schools, 50% of all enrollments are in grade specific courses, with courses in literature, writing and reading accounting for an additional 43% of enrollments in English courses: (3) speech and theatre courses account for 12% of all enrollments in English courses; and (4) the data suggest that Illinois junior and senior high schools need to undertake more extensive efforts in remedial work in English, in literary and theatrical studies, and in advanced studies in English if the goals of the state board of education are to be realized. The report also discusses the state board of education's goals and policies in the areas of reading and writing, gifted education, and arts in education: the future for English curricula in Illinois secondary schools: a comparison of state and national survey data (the latter drawn from Arthur N. Applebee's "Survey of Teaching Conditions in English"): and hypotheses for further research. The census data in tabular form are appended. (AEA)

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Illinois Secondary School Course Offerings

Illinois State Board of Education

Research and Statistics

SPECIAL REPORT ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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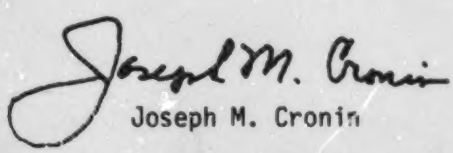
FOREWORD

In 1977 the Illinois State Board of Education in cooperation with the Illinois Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development conducted a Census of Secondary School Course Offerings, Enrollments, and Cocurricular Activities. This was the first such statewide census of basic curriculum data in Illinois. The Census was designed to produce normative data relative to offerings and enrollments in Illinois public secondary schools and to establish a source of information on secondary school curriculum at the peak of public high school enrollment.

The Census project was conducted and the general report was written by Dr. William L. Humm, Research Scientist, Research and Statistics Section, Illinois State Board of Education. This special report on English Language Arts was written by Dr. Lawrence D. Freeman, Manager, Teacher Education and Program Approval, Illinois State Board of Education and edited by Dr. Humm. It is based on statistics from the Census project.

Observations and conclusions in this report are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent policies or views of the Illinois State Board of Education or the State Superintendent of Education.



Joseph M. Cronin

State Superintendent of Education

HIGHLIGHTS SUMMARY

1) Illinois junior and senior high schools typically rely on general, grade specific courses to provide instruction in English-Language Arts.

2) In junior high schools, students typically take two courses--a general course and a course in reading.

3) In senior high schools, 50% of all enrollments are in grade specific courses; courses in literature, writing and reading account for an additional 43% of enrollments in English courses.

4) Speech and theatre courses account for only 12% of all enrollments in English courses.

5) Enrollment patterns by sex indicate that more females than males enroll in "honors" or "advanced" English courses and in business English. More males than females are enrolled in remedial courses, and courses focusing on media.

6) The data suggest, though not conclusively, that Illinois junior and senior high schools need to undertake more extensive efforts in remedial work in English, in literary and theatrical studies, and advanced studies in English, if the goals of the State Board of Education are to be realized.

7) These data do not provide the basis for the assessment of English curricula in Illinois secondary schools since the census only collected course titles, not descriptions of course content.

8) Perhaps the most surprising findings were (1) the relative scarcity of courses focused on expository writing; and (2) the virtual absence of courses devoted to the study of the structure of the English language.

9) Because of the lack of previous data, no trends can be documented. It cannot be determined for instance if the apparent reliance on the elective system in senior high schools is declining, increasing, or maintaining itself.

English Language Arts Course Offerings Report
1976-77

This report is based on Illinois Census of Secondary School Course Offerings and Enrollments, 1976-77: General Report prepared in 1978 by the Research and Statistics Section of the Illinois State Board of Education. While the General Report described curriculum and enrollment trends along several dimensions, this report focuses specifically on the data regarding "English."

As used in this report, the term, "English" refers to those courses reported by respondents under the general heading of English Language Arts. There has been no attempt to recategorize courses under any prior definition of English. Inspection of the data suggests that the courses reported under this heading are those coming under the jurisdiction of departments, programs or groups of faculty referred to in a school as "English." The data reveal, for instance, that courses apparently comparable in content are reported under other curricular headings. For instance, Teaching of English as a Second Lanuage is reported under Foreign Languages; over 100 courses in business English are reported under the general heading of Business; and over 300 English courses and 24 reading and communication courses are reported under Special Education. Because English course offerings are extensive and the titles of courses unstandardized, grouping of course titles into various categories was necessary for purposes of analysis. In specific instances, this process involved considerable judgment concerning the appropriate category for some courses. In about 150 instances, course titles were not amenable to categorizing and were grouped together under "Other English." While the assignment of a specific course to a category might be challenged, it is assumed for purposes of this analysis that even if all questionable judgments were erroneous, the number of courses involved is not sufficient to distort the general character of the data.

All schools in Illinois are required to provide "coordinated and supervised" courses of study in a number of areas including English Language Arts. Requirements for elementary schools which apply to "junior high schools" include providing such a course of study in "Language Arts, Reading and Other Communication Skills." High schools are required to "provide a comprehensive curriculum" including Language Arts. Minimal high school graduation requirements established by the state mandate that:

> In a four year high school, three units (of 16) shall be in Language Arts and in a three year high school two units (of 12) shall be in Language Arts. In either instance, emphasis shall be on reading and writing skills while one-half unit may be in oral communciation.

These requirements are the most extensive for any curricular area and result in numerous English course offerings in Illinois secondary schools.

These requirements are implemented in a wide variety of ways by the junior and senior high schools included in the census. Over 300 course titles in English Language Arts are reported. This diversity of course offerings

appears to reflect differences in size, composition of student bodies, and communities in which schools are located. In some instances, it appears that diversity is enhanced by some schools of modest size exploring different ways of organizing the English Language Arts curriculum.

The total number of courses reported in English-Language Arts is affected by the instructions given respondents for filling out the reporting forms. These instructions indicate that data are to be reported "for all courses for which credit and/or grades (including pass/fail) are given." High schools, were asked to "report data only for those courses which would be identified on a student's transcript, e.g., 'mini-courses' should be reported only if such courses are identified on a student's transcript." As a result of these instructions and curricular patterns in the reporting schools, the list of course titles includes courses that vary extensively in length of time. In Illinois high schools, 45% of all English courses are a full year in length, 44% are one-half year, and about 10% are a quarter or trimester in length. At the junior high level, the percentage of full year courses is much higher (79.7%), with the remainder almost evenly split between courses one-half year or a quarter in length. These facts compel caution when attempting to generalize about English "courses."

If the median is taken as typical, the number of English courses offered by junior high schools is not appreciably affected by size. Even at the 75th percentile, size does not create a dramatic effect (Table I). These English courses constitute roughly 1/4 of the typical junior high school's academic course offerings. This proportion is held to, almost without regard to school size at the median. At the 75th percentile, the proportion of English courses decreases as size increases. The range of the proportion of English to all academic courses is from approximately 18% to 50%. Size does not seem to be the influential variable; rather this fluctuation is more probably accounted for by varying lengths of courses. These data suggest that English Language Arts is assigned a high priority in junior high curricula (Table II).

(See Table I and II)

The data for high school English course offerings reveal a considerably different relationship between size and number of courses offered. If the median is taken to represent the typical school, schools with 500-999 students offer between 25 and 33% more English courses than those schools with lower enrollments. Schools with 1,000 or more students offer between 25% more to over twice as many courses as those with lower enrollments. Some distortion in these patterns may be due to a higher proportion of shorter courses in larger schools. At the same time, grade level organization may slightly influence the data, since 93% of all schools encompassing grades 7-12 have less than 500 students, and 72% of the three year high schools have enrollments exceeding 1,000.

(See Table III)

When the number of English course offerings is compared with all academic course offerings, the English course offerings of the typical high school approximate 30% of all academic course offerings regardless of size. The same proportion holds at the 75th percentile, again regardless of size. At the 25th percentile, the proportion falls below 25% only in schools with fewer than 200 students, but in no case exceeds 30%. These data indicate that between 25 and 30% of all academic course offerings are accounted for by English. Again, it is necessary in making these comparisions to note the distortion caused by the fact that the lowest percentage of full year courses occurs in English. Finally, these proportions may well be influenced by the extensive number of curricular areas, e.g., reading, speech, literature, that are grouped under English.

(See Table IV)

Course enrollment data provide a means of assessing the extent to which these course offerings are available to students and the kinds of courses that appear to represent the typical course contexts in which students receive English instruction. At the junior high level, virtually all schools rely on grade specific English Language Arts courses to provide instruction in these areas. Over 90% of all junior high schools offer such courses at the 7th and 8th grade levels, and they account for an extremely high percentage of the schools' students.

In junior high schools, grade specific courses are most frequently supplemented by reading courses, a high percentage of which are required when offered by the school. While smaller schools do not tend to offer speech courses as frequently as larger schools, those under 200 enrollments offering such courses enroll over 2/3 of their students in them; schools of over 1,000 do not require such courses even if offered and enroll less than 12% of their students in them.

(See Table V)

Similar analysis of data for high schools reveals that grade specific courses are the most frequently reported courses (Table VI). These data reveal that regardless of size, over 2/3 of the high schools offer grade specific courses at the 9th and 10th grade levels. The frequency of such course offerings at the 11th and 12th grade levels is not significantly different at the extremes of enrollment. The significant differences appear in the size range 1,000-1,699 which accounts for about 14% of all Illinois high schools and enrolls about 20% of all students. As Table VI indicates, this phenomenon cannot be accounted for by graduation requirements; students appear to elect such courses, particularly at the 12th grade level.

(See Table VI)

At the same time, grade specific courses are reported as the most frequently required courses. In addition to these courses, schools most frequently require speech; the range across size categories is 10-25%. Only in the enrollment category 500-999, do 10% of the schools require a writing course.

(See Table VII)

Examination of the data regarding required courses by community type indicates pronounced differences, particularly in the percentage of schools requiring grade specific English courses. The data regarding these courses indicate that in general, if a grade specific course at the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade level is offered by a school, except in the central city, it is required in at least 70% of the cases.

(See Table VIII)

An examination of other data does not permit generalizations about the English courses typically taken by high school students to fulfill requirements. Aside from grade specific courses, only speech and American literature courses are specifically required by 10% or more of the high schools in differing kinds of communities. Eighteen to 20% of suburban and independent city schools require a course in speech; 17% of rural schools require such a course. Eighteen percent of the suburban schools require American Literature.

The data regarding specific course requirements suggest that students fulfill state mandated graduation requirements in a wide variety of ways. Except for rural high schools, a significant percentage of schools rely on systems other than requiring specific courses.

Enrollment patterns in various courses reveal both the differences among requirements and course offerings at the junior and senior high school levels and reveal those areas which attract most high school students (Table IX). If enrollments reflect both requirements and student choice, reading decreases in importance at the high school level; writing becomes more important at the high school level; literature enrollments are seven times those in theatre and almost three times those in speech.

(See Table IX)

When female and male enrollment patterns in the various course categories are examined, in most categories, there is a difference of less than 1% between the percentage of males and females in the schools enrolled in a course. In schools offering Business English, over 6% more females are enrolled in business English than males; over 3% more males than females are enrolled in remedial English and remedial communication, while over 3% more female than males are enrolled in "Honors" English. If most of the remaining courses are regarded as electives, males tend to enroll more frequently than females in science fiction, mass communication and media courses.

Females tend to enroll more frequently in poetry, ethnic literature, creative writing and theatre courses. These results are perhaps expected given what is known about sex-associated differences in verbal facility. Yet it should be noted that differences in male and female enrollments were less than 1% in two-thirds of the 55 course categories. And with two exceptions, no single category in which differences do appear enrolls more than 10% of the students in schools offering such courses. The two exceptions are remedial communications and honors English.

(See Table X)

State Board of Education Goals and Policies

The course census data for English Language Arts can illuminate the current efforts of public secondary schools in areas in which the State Board of Education has adopted specific policies and goals. These areas are: improving reading and literacy, remedial education, gifted education, and arts in education. Because the census is based on course titles and because work in these areas may be subsumed under other titles, no definitive conclusions can be drawn. General indications of school efforts in these areas can, however, be drawn from the data.

Reading and Writing

The State Board of Education has adopted a goal in the area of improving reading and literacy. This goal states: "Every school system should assure its community that students are prepared to leave the schools with the ability to read and communicate effectively." The goal continues, "Every community should provide programs to assure every citizen's right to read." As noted previously, reading as a distinct course appears more frequently in junior than in senior high schools, whereas remedial reading courses appear more frequently in high schools. The area of remedial reading is discussed below. The Board goal addresses not only reading, but effective communication. Relatively few high schools offer writing courses, and fewer require them. Virtually all schools offer work in some form of oral communication. Review of these data does not permit generalizations about secondary efforts in developing reading and writing skills, primarily because of the extensive reliance on grade specific courses. With the information at hand, it appears that this Board goal is primarily addressed through grade specific courses and "speech" courses at the senior high level, although some high schools offer courses specifically in writing and reading.

The policy position the State Board of Education adopted concerning remedial education acknowledges that while every person at the same age level should not be expected to demonstrate the same level of competency, the school system should help each person develop to his maximum capacity as rapidly as possible. Based on this assumption, the Board calls for early identification of problems in skill development and development of programs to correct these problems. As a result of these efforts at the K-12 level, the Board foresees the possibility of post secondary institutions reducing their efforts in remedial education.

The data generated by the course census do not permit unqualified statements about secondary school remedial efforts in areas relevant to English. Some courses are clearly labelled "remedial." Others may or may not be intended to provide such assistance. The category of courses labelled "developmental" may or may not, depending on the meaning attributed to the term by a particular school. Further, it is unclear: (1) to what extent courses with other titles are, in fact, oriented to remediation; and (2) to what extent courses labelled "remedial" enroll students with learning handicaps. It is not possible to draw a clear distinction between students served in "remedial" English courses and in the 312 English and 24 Reading-Language Arts Courses listed under Special Education. With all of these cautions in mind, the data for courses already labelled "remedial" and "individualized reading" can be examined.

The data for junior high schools (which do not include any data concerning 7-8 graders in Chicago) indicate that 7.6% offer courses in remedial English and 33% offer courses in remedial reading. In the schools offering these courses, over 9% of the schools' enrollments are enrolled in remedial English and over 12% are enrolled in remedial reading. Of the schools offering work in these areas, most are suburban. Only 3 of 29 central city junior high schools and only 1 of 104 rural schools offer remedial English. A higher number of junior high schools offer remedial reading, but in none of the community categories do more than 44% of the junior high schools offer such a course. While it is possible that the remaining junior high schools address student's difficulties in English and reading in ways other than courses bearing these titles, it appears that there is substantial progress to be made at the junior high school level if the Board's policy on remedial education is to be realized in reading and English. If we assume that, on a state-wide basis, the percentage of students needing work in remedial English and reading remains constant, we could assume that over 16,000 junior high students (exclusive of Chicago students) would profit from work in both remedial English and remedial reading.

Insofar as course offerings are a measure of school effort to address the needs of students experiencing difficulties in reading and English, high schools appear to be making a more consistent effort than junior high schools. Table XI displays the information concerning courses labelled "remedial" and "individualized" offered by high schools located in various kinds of communities.

(See Table XI)

When data for the two reading areas are aggregated the following results appear:

	Central City	Suburb	Independent City	Rural
% of Schools Offering	74.7%	59.2%	21.8%	18.5%

Three alternative explanations of these data are possible:

1. The incidence of students needing work in remedial reading is much higher in central city and suburban high schools;

2. Independent city and rural high schools respond to difficulties in reading through mechanisms other than courses labelled "remedial reading" or "individualized" reading; or

3. Independent city and rural schools are not meeting the needs of students in the area of reading as extensively as central city and suburban schools.

The first explanation does not appear to be acceptable. When rural and independent city districts do offer the courses in reading, about 6-9% of their students are enrolled in such courses. The acceptability of the other two explanations cannot be tested with available data.

Even though the remedial efforts of suburban and central city high schools are more extensive than those of other kinds of high schools, the data suggest that further efforts may be needed in remedial areas. In central city high schools offering remedial reading, over 9% of the students are enrolled in such courses; yet these schools account for approximately 72% of all students in schools surveyed. If students in such schools need instruction in remedial reading and are not getting it because of an absence of offerings in this area, approximately 5,400 students with reading problems are not being adequately addressed. If the same assumptions are followed for suburban schools, approximately 6,500 students are not being served as needed. The results are about 6,800 in rural schools and 3,500 in independent city schools. Aggregated this means that over 22,000 students or more than 3% of all students may not be receiving needed work in remedial reading.

While the results of this examination are speculative for the reasons outlined above, further examination of the efforts of schools, particularly junior high schools, needs to be undertaken to determine the necessary efforts in remedial work.

Gifted Education

The State Board has adopted a policy regarding gifted education that encourages schools to develop programs for students gifted and talented either in general intellectual ability or in some specific area. The efforts of secondary schools to respond to such students have varied extensively in form. For this reason and others, the census data do not permit development of a clear picture of how secondary schools are responding through English courses to gifted and talented students. It is possible however to make some observation about course work normally pursued by "advanced" if not "gifted" students. At the junior high level, few schools offer courses normally reserved for advanced students. Six schools offer courses labelled "honors" or "advanced." High schools provide more of these courses. Some offer courses labelled "seminar," "workshop" or "advanced." Others offer "honors" courses. Still others provide "independent study", and the highest number offer work in college level English. If we assume no school offers courses in more than one of these areas, slightly over 40% of high schools offer advanced work; these schools enroll almost 65% of high school students. About 35% of all Illinois high school students attend schools that do not offer such advanced study in English. The data on enrollments in these courses suggest that about 5% of all students would be in them if they were available; on this assumption, almost 12,000 students in Illinois could benefit from, but do not have, such an opportunity.

When all four course categories are aggregated for schools by community type, 83% of the rural schools, all central city schools, over 35% of the independent city schools and 46% of the suburban schools offer courses in this area. These extremely tentative results need more testing against other kinds of data.

Arts in Education

A third area in which the State Board has developed policy focuses on arts in education. This Board action noted that an appreciation of the arts can contribute to the quality of individual and societal life, but that "Illinois schools have an expressed need for maintaining quality programs in the present era of declining human and material resources." At least two areas--literature and theatre--traditionally falling within the boundaries of "English Language Arts" appear relevant to this Board action.

Because of the large proportion of grade specific and other courses which may involve study of literary forms, it is not possible to develop an accurate statement concerning the extent students study literary matters at the high school level, nor even the number of high schools offering courses in this area. It is possible, however, to calculate the number of students enrolled in courses devoted exclusively to literature. The results of these calculations indicate that literature courses account for about 21% of all enrollments in English.

Illinois secondary schools offer courses in a number of areas related to theatre. These courses include areas such as acting, dramatic literature, and production, as well as general courses in theatre or drama. Enrollments in theatre related courses account for about 3% of all English Language enrollments at both the junior and senior high school levels.

At the high school level, the most frequently reported course offering is a general course in theatre or drama. About one-third of all high schools offer such a course. When offered, an average of about 3% of the school's students enroll in the course. About 12% of all high schools offer courses in dramatic literature or Shakespeare; it is impossible to determine whether these courses approach this literature from a literary or theatrical perspective. Finally, some high schools offer more technical courses in the areas of acting (9%) and production (14%).

If we assume that those schools offering courses in acting and production also offer a basic theatre or drama course, it appears probable that in 60 to 100 schools more than one course in theatre (exclusive of dramatic literature) is offered. Alternatively, of the 230 schools offering theatre or drama it appears that between 130-170 schools offer only one such course. Finally, if it is assumed that theatre or drama courses and those in dramatic literature or Shakespere are basic theatre courses, and if the data for these two courses is aggregated, less than half of all high schools serving about 60% of high school students offer such courses. Based on these admittedly challengeable assumptions, it would appear that approximately 40% of all high school students do not have access to courses

in the area of theatre. Reported enrollment rates suggest that approximately 20,000 students not having access to these courses would enroll in them if available.

Summary

The generation of more extensive course offerings in two of the areas--remedial reading and theatre--related to SBE policies probably cannot be effected without additional monetary support particularly in smaller schools. But even if fiscal support were available, it is likely that extensive efforts in pre- and in-service teacher education are needed. These two areas tend to be taught by teachers prepared in English or in both speech and English. Historically, pre-service preparation of English teachers has not included work in the area of reading, and study of theatre has not typically been included in programs preparing English teachers and has not been consistently included in the preparation of speech teachers. The realities of school staffing and course offering patterns clearly suggest that insofar as providing instruction in remedial reading and theatre are State Board priorities, they are not likely to be realized without significant changes in pre-service preparation of English and speech teachers and extensive in-service work.

The Future for English Curricula in Illinois Secondary Schools

Because the data examined in this report have been collected only once, it is not possible to offer definitive statements about how English curricula have changed in recent years or how they might change. A review of all the course titles reported indicates that as conceived in public secondary schools, "English" encompasses a wide number of concerns and utilizes a wide array of perspectives. The largest number of titles reported fall in the area of "literature." These titles range from "Bible Literature" to "Urban Literature" to "Future Literature," from genre courses to historical surveys, from courses in "Huckleberry Finn" to "Black Writers" to "Masterpieces." The development of this array of courses, and the data covering them, suggest no set of principles by which future trends might be discerned. Their occurrence seems to be rooted more in the specific circumstances of local schools than in any conception of "English."

While the literature area has produced a wide variety of courses, the course titles in the area of writing provide few leads about developments in teaching writing beyond a basic distinction between "expository" and "creative" writing. The most discernible development in the area of writing is the number of courses in journalism, mass communication and related areas. It appears premature to argue, on the available data, that Illinois high schools are beginning to conceptualize writing as a subtopic under the heading of "communications."

The number of schools offering courses in the area of "language" is limited. Courses reported in this area range across linguistics, etymology, modern grammar, history of the English language, and semantics. If course titles are any indication, Illinois high schools have either not judged as

relevant or have not incorporated recent advances in linguistics into English course offerings. It is of some note that no high school offers a course in sociolinguistics.

The area of speech continues to be dominated, the data suggest, by rather traditional notions of "platform speaking." There is little indication that secondary schools have relied on recent developments in "speech-communication" as the basis for developing this aspect of the "English Language Arts" curricula.

All of the data indicate that: (1) the boundaries of English as a area of study in secondary schools remain extremely blurred; and (2) there is no discernable statewide pattern of curricular organization, particularly if requirements are examined. Whether the recent emphasis on "basics" and "competence" will affect the area of English is debatable.

Whether decreases in secondary school enrollments and consequently in fiscal and human resources will have, or perhaps already has had, an effect on course offerings is not apparent at this point. Should these influences begin to assert themselves noticeably, it is likely that the tension between two emphases in English--linguistic skill development and study of and participation in the imaginative life--is likely to be increased, perhaps painfully. On the other hand, current State Board policy initiatives suggest support for both these emphases.

Comparison of State and National Data

A recent study (Arthur N. Applebee, A Survey of Teaching Conditions in English, 1978) allows some comparisons of Illinois English course offerings and patterns in secondary schools across the country. This study is based on data generated in the reponses of 291 secondary schools.

A direct comparison of data from this study with those from the course census cannot be undertaken because of the differences in the structure of survey questions. However, some tentative comparisons can be suggested. According to the Applebee study, the schools studied required about three and one-half years of English; slightly over 54 percent of randomly selected schools required four years. Applebee concludes that "the figures suggest that the upward trend in the graduation requirements has stopped, and may even have begun to reverse itself."

Because the course census did not compile data regarding graduation requirements generally, similar statements cannot be made about Illinois secondary schools. The course census requested information only about specific courses required for graduation. Yet it appears that a significant portion of Illinois high schools do not require four years of English. About 45% of all Illinois high schools offer "English, Grade 12"; of these 322 high schools, about 12-15% require this specific course for graduation. It would seem that the 55% not offering this course provide similar work through elective courses in English--primarily literature, though the data available do not enable testing of this assumption.

These data do suggest, however, that beyond the tenth grade, except in rural schools, the elective system becomes a significant force in shaping the English curriculum.

(See Table XII)

Clearly, work at the twelfth grade level in English is elective in character for most students. At the eleventh grade level, except in rural schools, students apparently elect courses in at least 30% of all schools that offer English Grade 11, and in many central city schools offering this course, elective systems appear to prevail. Statewide, excluding central city schools, in nearly 20% of the schools offering this course, elective systems seem to exist at the eleventh grade. Further, only about 57% of all schools offer this course.

All of these data indicate that the elective system is a significant feature of the English curriculum in Illinois.

This finding is similar to Applebee's finding. He notes that during the fifties and early sixties, the concern in English was "with an academic model for the English curriculum, a period that emphasized special programs for the academically talented, the tripod of language, literature, and composition, and the 'discipline' of English." However, the late 1960's and early 70's witnessed a challenging of traditional assumptions as well as dwindling school enrollments and budgets. According to Applebee, these forces brought about a shift in the concerns regarding English. Instead of relying on models borrowed from the college campus, teachers began exploring elective programs, classroom drama, small group discussions, sexism and racism, relevance, public doublespeak and the language of deception. The elective curriculum was perhaps the major innovation. Applebee notes that the elective program "varied from school to school, sometimes involving a totally elective program." In other cases, the electives were designed to "insure a cumulative, if somewhat idiosyncratic, program for all students." In the randomly selected schools studied by Applebee, over half had at least some students involved in elective programs at Grade 10. Over a third had between 26% and 100% of their tenth graders involved in such a program. The percentage of schools picked on some criterion of "excellence" and pursuing such programs is even higher. Over 20% of such schools had all tenth graders involved in elective systems.

At the same time, comments provided by English faculty in the schools surveyed suggest that "most schools are entering a phase of reconceptualizing their elective curriculum, imposing somewhat more order--and constraints--upon it." This was being accomplished, not by abandoning electives, but by "weeding out unsuccessful courses, providing a better system of guidance for students, and adding new courses in response to the back-to-the-basics movement and minimal competency requirements." Because of the absence of previous data it is unclear whether a similar trend has occurred, or is occurring in Illinois.

Finally, Applebee's study provides some comparative data regarding gifted and remedial programs. In this study, roughly 2/3 of the randomly selected schools offered remedial work at the tenth and twelfth grade levels. Schools selected on some criterion of excellence tend to offer such work more frequently (83-98%).

Instruction designed for the gifted was not as frequent in any of the categories. The "excellent" schools offered classes for the gifted in about 75% or more of the cases; only 44% of the randomly selected schools did so. The data from this study clearly indicate that offerings for both remedial and gifted students are related to school size.

It is impossible to develop data comparable to Applebee's from the course census because Applebee reports data on "classes," and not "courses." However, the following table suggests that the correlation between size and offering of remedial work exists in Illinois.

(See Table XIII)

While these course titles do not capture all arrangements for responding to the needs of remedial or gifted students, the patterns that influence the size of offerings are comparable to Applebee's findings. It is unclear whether Illinois students who would profit from remedial and advanced instruction are being served by means other than courses or whether resources prevent the provision of needed work. In either case, additional new investigation of remedial and gifted instruction is necessary.

Some Hypotheses for Further Research

In 1978, Scott Thompson and Nancy DuLeonibus published the results of a cooperative study sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. This study examined the practices of schools with stable or rising SAT scores. The general finding was that students in these schools "take more academic courses.... than do examinees in the schools with severe decreases in SAT scores." The study focuses explicitly on the English program and states that "more than half the principals responding to the NASSP questionnaire sent to schools with rising or stable SAT scores identified their English curriculum as contributing to good verbal scores." Further, another survey, conducted by the Educational Testing Service, found "enrollment in English classes to be a full four years in the stable-score schools as contrasted to 3.8 years in the declining-score schools (a difference significant at the .05 level)." Based on these findings as well as commentary from principals, the study presents "Guidelines for English." The guidelines admonish that "college-bound students should enroll in an English class during each year of attendance in a secondary school. The English curriculum must emphasize, but not be restricted to, expository writing, language usage, vocabulary, and serious literature."

This study asserts a correlation between SAT verbal scores and the character of the English curriculum. In Illinois a similar relationship might well be examined by comparing data from the course census and the results from the Illinois Inventory of Education Progress. These findings would assist decisionmakers at both the local and state levels to determine the relative influence of secondary English curricula on student knowledge.

APPENDIX: Data Tables

Table I. Number of English Courses Offered by Public Junior High Schools (by Size)

School Enrollment	Low	High	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
<200	2	6	2	3	4
200-499	0	11	2	3	4
500-999	0	19	2	3	5
1000 or>	2	12	3	4	6

Table II. Percent of All Junior High School Academic Courses Devoted to English (by Size)

School Enrollment	25th Percentile*	Median*	75th Percentile*
<200	25%	30%	36%
200-499	22%	27%	33%
500-999	20%	23%	29%
1000 or>	25%	29%	23%

* These statistics represent a ratio of the various centiles for English to those respectively for all academic subject areas. The statistics shown here do not represent the centiles of individual school ratios of English to all academic subject areas.

Table III. Number of English Courses Offered by Public High Schools (by Size)

School Enrollment	Low	High	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
<200	0	26	5	8	10
200-499	2	31	7	9	11
500-999	2	30	9	12	15
1000-1699	2	39	11	15	21
1700-2599	5	36	13	17	21
2600 or >	10	70	17	19	23

Table IV. Percent of All High School Academic Courses Devoted to English (by Size)

School Enrollment	25th Percentile*	Median*	75th Percentile*
<200	23%	31%	30%
200-499	27%	30%	31%
500-999	28%	32%	34%
1000-1699	25%	28%	32%
1700-2599	24%	27%	29%
2600 or >	28%	27%	28%

* These statistics represent a ratio of the various centiles for English to those respectively for all academic subject areas. The statistics shown here do not represent the centiles of individual school ratios of English to all academic subject areas.

Table V. Various Courses Reported by More Than 10% of Junior High Schools (by Size)

	Less than 200			200-499			500-999			1000 or >		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
Eng/Lang. Arts 7	100	100	49	94	99	53	87	99	48	87	92	38
Eng/Lang. Arts 8	100	99	50	94	98	50	88	97	45	100	93	40
Eng/Lang. Arts 9	1	100	37	3	100	34	23	95	34	53	88	35
Reading/ General	40	94	80	28	91	86	25	74	60	27	75	43
Reading/ Development	13	73	61	13	67	54	30	56	45	13	100	54
Reading/ Remedial	33	30	20	31	20	15	34	20	10	53	38	15
Speech & Public Speaking	6	40	69	6	45	39	19	34	33	20	0	11

Columns A = % of Schools Offering Course

B = % of Schools Offering Course Which Report the Course as Required

C = % of School Enrollment in the Course

Table VI. Percent of High Schools Reporting Grade Specific Courses (By Size)

	<200		200-499		500-999		1000-1699		1700-2599		2600 or >	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Eng/Lang Arts 9	92	92	92	95	87	83	64	79	73	46	79	66
Eng/Lang Arts 10	85	91	82	96	79	85	66	63	72	42	88	50
Eng/Lang Arts 11	70	89	60	89	50	75	36	48	53	29	71	35
Eng/Lang Arts 12	58	16	47	16	35	12	27	11	54	0	58	14

Columns A = % of Schools Offering Course

B = % of Schools Offering Course Which Report the Course as Required

Table VII. Specific English Courses Required By 10% or More of High Schools and Percent of Schools Requiring the Course (by Size)*

	<200	200-499	500-999	1000-1699	1700-2599	2600 or >
Writing	9%	6%	10%	9%	5%	7%
Speech	12%	10%	16%	20%	11%	25%
Am. Lit.	7%	10%	5%	9%	6%	8%

*Does not include grade specific courses.

Table VIII. Grade Specific English Courses Reported by High Schools (by Community Type)

	Rural			Independent City			Central City			Suburb		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
Grade 9	93	88	95	80	70	86	62	17	27	78	61	77
Grade 10	84	80	95	78	68	86	80	13	16	66	51	76
Grade 11	62	56	89	51	36	69	68	9	14	40	28	70
Grade 12	47	7	15	40	5	13	68	1	6	32	4	12

Columns A = % of Schools Offering Course

B = % of Schools Reporting Course as Required

C = % of Schools Offering Course Which Report the Course as Required

Table IX. Percents of Enrollments in Various English Courses for High Schools and Junior High Schools

Percent of State Enrollment

	0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100%
Grade Specific Courses	
H.S.	50
J.H.S.	94
Literature	
H.S.	21
J.H.S	4
Writing	
H.S.	13
J.H.S.	2
Reading	
H.S.	9
J.H.S.	34
Speech	
H.S.	9
J.H.S.	5
Theatre	
H.S.	3
J.H.S.	3
Linguistics	
H.S.	2
J.H.S.	.0

Table X. Course Categories in Which Enrollments By Sex Differ By More Than 1%

Course	Total Males	Total Females	% of Schools Offering, Male	% of Schools Offering, Female	Difference
Occup. English	3,236	2,192	8.72	6.22	+2.5%M
Business English	423	1,514	2.41	8.58	+6.2%F
Remedial English	16,050	11,092	10.19	7.14	+3.1%M
Comm. Remedial	13,633	11,504	21.01	17.33	+3.7%M
English Honors	10.352	12,633	13.85	17.29	+3.4%F
College Level Eng.	3,728	4,667	3.88	5.04	+1.2%F
Dev. Reading	8,546	6,961	8.24	6.96	+1.3%M
Remedial Reading	15,061	12,052	9.63	7.79	+1.8%M
Grammar	4,159	4,727	8.68	10.23	+1.6%F
Ethnic Lit.	1,633	2,100	2.98	4.00	+1.0%F
Poetry	586	1,821	1.68	5.44	+3.8%F
Novel	2,576	3,109	4.59	5.75	+1.2%F
Science Fiction	3,839	2,659	8.50	6.11	+2.4%M
Creative Writing	4,333	6,695	2.77	4.42	+1.7%F

Table X. (continued)

Course	Total Males	Total Females	% of Schools Offering, Male	% of Schools Offering, Female	Difference
Journalism	6,991	9,343	2.82	3.87	+1.1%F
Mass Comm.	7,378	5,841	7.29	5.93	+1.4%M
Radio, T.V.	9,286	5,435	6.79	4.11	+2.7%M
Theatre	4,093	6,293	2.57	4.03	+1.5%F
Art	1,465	2,411	2.51	4.26	+1.8%F

Table XI. High Schools Offering Remedial Courses By Type of Community

	Central City		Suburb		Independent City		Rural		All	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Remedial English	55	14	46	6	39	6	20	7	33	9
G.S. Comm., Remedial	60	21	3	6	3	7	1	5	10	19
Remedial Reading	70	13	46	6	16	6	16	6	30	9
Individ. Reading	5	8	13	8	6	9	3	8	6	8

Columns A = % of Schools Offering Course

B = % of School Enrollment in the Course

Table XII. Frequency of Grade Specific English Courses Offered and Required in High Schools (by Community Type)

	Central City		Suburb		Independent City		Rural	
	# Offer.	# Req.	# Offer.	# Req.	# Offer.	# Req.	# Offer.	# Req.
Grade 10	76	12 (16%)	105	80 (76%)	79	68 (86%)	295	280 (95%)
Grade 11	65	9 (14%)	63	44 (70%)	52	36 (70%)	219	196 (90%)
Grade 12	65	4 (6%)	51	6 (12%)	40	5 (12%)	166	25 (15%)

Table XIII. Percent of High Schools Offering Remedial Courses (By Size)

	< 200	200-499	500-999	1000-1699	1700-2599	2600 or >
Remedial English	21	19	40	39	53	65
G.S. Comm.	--	1	6	16	28	29
Remedial Reading	15	13	28	49	56	60
Individ. Reading	--	3	4	16	8	10

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